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SUMMARY

The big news of the period was the opening on January 29, 1952, with great pomp and pageantry, of Nigeria's first House of Representatives, a truly historic occasion when, for the first time, Nigerians assumed ministerial appointments, in the administration of their country. The Governor made a moving speech to 148 members of the new House, only twelve of which are British.

The passing of King George on February 6, 1952, overshadowed all other developments here after that date.

POLITICAL

The Opening of Nigeria's First House of Representatives under the New Constitution.

A constitutional landmark was reached in Lagos on January 29, 1952, when representatives of the North, East and West came together to inaugurate Nigeria's first Parliament (House of Representatives) which has been termed the boldest political experiment thus far in Nigerian history. The House is the highest legislature in the land, an almost all-African assembly.

Only thirteen members of the old Legislative Council were returned to the New House. Most of the new members had never entered a legislature previously. Dr. Azikiwe was most conspicuous by his absence.

The Governor, acting as temporary President of the House, delivered an excellent speech which was well received in all quarters. He emphasized the need for cooperation, respect for each others' views, service to the people, a strong and united Nigeria, and success of the new constitution. (Full details in Despatch No. 282 of February 2, 1952).

The Governor Makes Brief Visit to U.K.

The Governor emplaned on February 7, 1952, for the U.K. to report personally on the introduction of the new constitution and to discuss the program for the forthcoming visit of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Nigeria. The Governor will be away for about a week.

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Duties of New Central Ministers Established.

The Governor has named the specific duties of each of the new Ministers, in the Council of Ministers. These are listed in detail in Despatch No. 280 of January 30, 1952.

Interesting Sidelights on Effect of Appointment of Nigerians as Ministers on British Heads of Departments.

Ministers obviously outrank Department Heads, several of whom have already made their new rank felt. The Minister of Transport, for example, considered himself slighted when the General Manager of the Nigerian Railway failed to assure him of cooperation. He then summoned the General Manager to his office and explained how he felt.

A few days ago the new Minister of Communications was paying his first visit to the Posts and Telegraphs Department, where his new office is to be located. While there he is said to have been shown a well-furnished office in the basement, and made to understand that the office was prepared for him. Later he found out that the Director (British) had his offices in a cooler location upstairs, and quickly effected a transfer.

The Man "Zik" - What Will Be His Role Now?

Now that Zik did not reach the new House of Representatives, or become a Minister, there is much speculation as to what course he will follow. Some of his enemies say that "Zik is now in the political frig (all mechanical refrigerators here are called "friges") and will remain locked up therein for at least five years. He may become completely frozen."

Some observers state that Zik's tactics are baffling Colonial Office officials, and feel that if he heads the opposition, which he almost certainly will, he will be in a position to wreck the new constitution, which can operate effectively only through a coalition of parties and groups, since no one party enjoys a majority in the new House of Representatives. Colonial experts are said to have the opinion that none of the new constitutions, giving natives wider forms of representation, without full responsibility, can work effectively without the operation of well organized parties, based on economic and social programs cutting across tribal and racial lines. There are numerous independents in the new House owing all allegiance to no political party.

Dr. Azikiwe says of his failure to reach the central House:
"I was betrayed, but not defeated."

Dr. Azikiwe was among five world figures invited to speak at an international dinner arranged by the Fellowship Commission to take place in Philadelphia in early March. The Consulate General understands that the State Department is actively cooperating in the matter. The invitation was extended by the President of Lincoln University, who visited West Africa two years ago.

Some observers are of the opinion that Zik may quit politics and resign his membership in the Western House, but the writer does not believe that will happen.

Western House May be Asked to Give Lagos a Native Authority in Place of the Mayoralty.

The Action Group has plans to abolish the municipal status of Lagos, and with it the mayoralty, because it feels that the mayoralty is incompatible with native tradition. They believe that what is proper is a Native Authority, in place of a Town Council, the President of which would be the Oba of Lagos. This would require special legislation, and if it materializes it would be a blow to the NCNC which usually wins elections to the Council. If the Oba comes in, his chiefs would constitute the majority of the Council, thus doing away with free elections and destroying the NCNC "fort" of Lagos. This is a political move designed to win additional ground for the Action Group.

British Members of Parliament Will Attend Budget Session of New House of Representatives.

A Parliamentary delegation of three is scheduled to visit Nigeria in March to bring to the new House good wishes of the Mother of Parliaments. The MP's are:

- Lord Clydesmuir, Governor of British Broadcasting Co.
- Mr. James Johnson, who is a schoolmaster by profession, and a labor member.
- Sir Edward Keeling, chairman of Conservative West African Group

The Yoruba People Urge the Oni of Ife to Resign as Minister Without Portfolio in the Council of Ministers.

The Yorubas feel that no native ruler should accept membership in a legislature or a ministerial post, and much less leave his domain, as both flout Yoruba tradition. Indignation has been aroused following publication of the fact that the important (Yoruba) native ruler, the Oni of Ife, has not only accepted a ministerial appointment but plans to move to Lagos. Yorubaland feels that this lowers the prestige and traditional dignity of its native rulers.

Much Heat Being Put on Mayor of Lagos as Result of His Alleged Doublecross of Political Organizations That Helped to Elect Him.

Dr. Olorun-Nimbe, Mayor of Lagos, has now been expelled from both the NCNC and the splinter group, the Democratic Party. The latter are now calling for his resignation as Mayor which, they claim, he agreed to present, upon election to the Western House of Assembly. Others are insisting that his salary and expense funds be withheld. These are undoubtedly political moves by his enemies to lower his prestige in the public mind. Meanwhile, the Mayor has not resigned his post, and has been elected to both the Western House of Assembly, and to the Central House of Representatives for a period of five years. He does not seem to be worried about the present smear campaign.

Action Group Exalts Over Election Results.

Prominent members of the Action Group continue to sound off to the press regarding their plans, aims, and political philosophy. This type of muscle-flexing is illustrated by a statement of the Honorable S.L. Akintola, Minister of Labor at the Center, who said in the latter part of January "It does not matter much who is Lieut. Governor (in the West) now since whoever he is, he will be bound by the advice of the Regional Ministers".

Apparently the Action Group does not yet regret having combined to exclude NCNC President Azikiwe from the Central House from which position his ability to attack Government measures would be hampered. Akintola in the same interview was still laughing over the "spanking" which has been administered to Zik.

Port Harcourt NCNC Expells Five Members.

The expulsion of Dr. Olorun-Nimbe from the NCNC in the West for lack of party discipline created much unfavorable comment in view of other flagrant breaches of discipline in the Eastern Region. Accordingly an NCNC meeting of the Port Harcourt Branch was held on January 26-27 and five "party rebels" who contested the general election against the party's official candidates were expelled.

ECONOMIC

Six Prominent British Businessmen Appointed to Central House of Representatives by Governor.

Under a special provision of the new constitution the Governor has appointed as special members of the House of Representatives to represent interests which, in his opinion, are not otherwise adequately represented in the House, six old-time local businessmen who are heads of prominent British commercial interests. Such interests include mining, shipping, petroleum and general business.

It is significant that British trading companies will be on hand, at all times to protect their vested interests in the new House of Representatives. No representation was given to minority groups such as Syrians, French, Lebanese and Greeks who form an important proportion of Nigeria's population and who play not an inconsequential part in the commercial activities of the country. Likewise the Governor gave no representation to Christian and Moslem religious groups. In addition there is a complete absence of women in the four principal legislatures (three regional and one central).

Nigerian Hides Flown to UK.

The first consignment of cattle hides ever to be flown to the UK recently arrived in London from Kano, Nigeria, on a BOAC freight plane. It was an experimental shipment organized by the United Africa Company. There were four tons of hides for shoe manufactures.

Third-Class Railway Fares Increased

As of February 1, 1952, the third class railway fares of the Nigerian rail lines were raised from a halfpenny to one and a half pence per mile. Increased operating costs were given as the reason for the increased fares.

Bumper Groundnut (Peanut) Crop Expected

A peanut harvest of at least 350,000 tons is predicted for this year's crop on the basis of sales to the end of January in the major growing centers. The buying season is expected to continue to the end of February and bring an all-time record for purchased tonnage.

Nigeria Groundnut Marketing Board Reports £8,151,715 Profit to October, 1950.

Peanut sales by the Board earned that agency a profit of over eight million pounds in its first nineteen months of operations, according to the first annual report. This recently-released information covers the period to October, 1950.

Purchasers of American Cars Must Show Previous Annual Mileage and Agree Not to Sell for Two Years.

Further details concerning the Nigerian Government's slight relaxation of restrictions upon the purchase of American cars by Nigerians were released last week. Applications for import permits are to be filed with the Civil Secretaries of the Regions and with the Director of Commerce and Industries by Lagos residents. Allocation for purchase of an auto costing over £1000 will be made only in exceptional cases. Applicants must show annual mileage covered, areas visited regularly and whether or not they will agree not to sell the car within two years of delivery.

Central Lagos Planning Scheme Includes Public
Financial Assistance for Builders of New Buildings.

The Governor in Council has approved a plan for the rebuilding of a portion of the center of Lagos and the giving of financial assistance to those who wish to buy property and build or rebuild under specifications of the plan. A scheme to modernize and clean up a large section in the heart of the city was drawn up by the Lagos Executive Development Board in October, 1951 and approved by the Government this week. It is hoped that the area affected will eventually have modern homes and apartments, new streets, children's playgrounds, parks and an efficient network of drainage gutters.

The projected facelifting will be done by private financing, with assistance to be given by the Board. Owners or occupants will be loaned money on a mortgage basis if they are able to carry out obligations thus assumed and if it can be shown they lack means to rebuild without assistance.

Nigerian Trade Reputation.

Apparently reports are drifting back to Nigeria of detrimental information regarding the reliability of the Nigerian traders. A Lagos newspaper has made an editorial request of the Government that the source of such reports be traced with a view to examining possible participation of the Nigerian Trade Commissioner in London. The editorial reports that official pamphlets and directives are being circulated among foreign Commercial Houses, Embassies, Consuls, Chambers of Commerce, Trade Organizations in Europe and America to the effect that foreign merchants should exercise extreme caution in dealing with Nigerians, with the implication that Nigerian merchants are not to be trusted.

LABOR

Conciliation Meetings Between Railway and Locomotive Engineers Open.

There will be recalled the recent "go-slow" strike on the part of railway engineers, which was ended last month. Conciliation meetings have now opened, and the union is asking for an adjustment of salaries, and full reinstatement of the persons who went out on strike and were dismissed. They have now been "re-engaged" with loss of retirement and other rights, and reinstatement cannot be made other than through special legislation. The head of the union has already put the heat on the new (African) Minister of Labor, indicating that the workers look to him for reinstatement.

OTHER

First Foreign Leader Grantee Becomes Development Officer.

Mr. A. Adio-Moses, ex-general secretary of the Nigerian Trade Union Congress, who recently returned to Nigeria from the United

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States, which country he visited on a Foreign Leader Grant, has been appointed in the Administrative Service of the Government and posted in the Development Section at Enugu.

It will be recalled that Mr. Adio-Moses, on his return from the United States, wrote several newspaper articles highly critical of the United States as respects race relations there. (Please see Despatch No. 213, of November 21, 1951)

Consulate Staff Presents Special Radio Show on Review of 1951

Members of the staff of the American Consulate General presented a special half-hour program, "A Year in the Making" Monday, January 28 at 8 p.m. over the Nigerian Broadcasting Service.

The program adapted from a Voice of America (IBD) script by USIE Lagos, was produced with full sound effects in collaboration with the Broadcasting Service.

Five Graduates of U.S. Colleges Elected to Nigerian Legislatures.

Five Nigerian graduates of American Colleges and universities are represented in the Central and Regional Legislatures of Nigeria under the new constitution.

Professor Eyo Eta (B.S., M.A., Columbia University) is Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources for the Eastern Region and a member of the Central House of Representatives from Calabar. He is the NCNC leader in the Central House.

K. Ozoombe Mbadiwe, (B.A., Lincoln University, M.A., Columbia University) is a member of the House of Representatives from Orlu in the East. He is a Vice President of the NCNC.

(Prince) A.A. Nwafor Orizu (B.A., Ohio State University, M.A., Columbia University, D.Litt, Lane College) is a member of the House of Representatives from Onitsha in the East. He is a member of the NCNC.

I.U. Akpabio, (Columbia University) is a member of the House of Representatives from Ikot Ekpene in the East.

Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (B.A., Lincoln University, M.A., University of Pennsylvania, D.Litt, Storer College and Lincoln University) member of the Western House of Assembly from Lagos. He is Federal President of the NCNC.

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Deficiency in Numbers of Medical Personnel in Nigeria.

A published report states that the total number of medical practitioners in Nigeria is now about 400, of whom 38 are American M.D.'s.

One-fifth of this total number are Africans and the majority of the doctors are in Civil Service. There are reported to be 15 (SIC), 15 dentists, the majority of whom are either in Government Service or in Army Medical Service. The most common estimate for the total number of persons in Nigeria is 30 million.

A. W. Childs
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Consul General

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